



COUNTY OF STILLWATER
STATE OF MONTANA
STILLWATER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
P. O. BOX 970
COLUMBUS, MONTANA 59019

August 29, 2013

Congressman Doc Hastings, Chair
Natural Resources Committee
United States House, Washington DC

Congressman Peter DeFazio, Ranking Member
Natural Resources Committee
United States House, Washington DC

RE: H.R 1526 – SRS Funding

Dear Chairman Hastings and Ranking Member DeFazio:

A phrase such as "money does not grow on trees" is quite often overused. In America's national forests, money and jobs do grow on trees. A failed federal forest management system has led to the loss of thousands jobs that have effected rural forested counties with undeserving social and economic problems. For Stillwater County, Montana this can only be solved by returning to a sustainable harvest level that will provide jobs and allow for a solid tax base to support badly needed services.

From Stillwater County's perspective, there are three reoccurring themes hindering sustainable forest management; 1) funding to prepare sales, 2) environmental analysis and review time for management activities, 3) litigation that stalls or stops a badly needed harvest.

An increase in sustainable forest management is essential if we are to provide the healthy forests that were envisioned by President Theodore Roosevelt. Forest mortality we are facing now is destroying habitat for wildlife, creating a catastrophic situation for massive wildfire's and leaving millions of acres of forests susceptible to massive insect infestation.


H.R 1526 addresses all of these issues. It provides a common sense approach for returning to sustainable forest management where a planned harvest can occur in a reasonable amount of time. Stillwater County does appreciate this legislation which allows for a temporary extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act. However, for long term social and financial health of rural forested communities, we must have the wages for jobs that are provided by a healthy forest industry.

We are asking your support for H.R. 1526 when it comes to the House floor.

STILLWATER COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS


Gerald W. Dell, Chair


Maureen Davey


Dennis Shupak

cc: Montana Congressman Steve Daines